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## *In Memoriam:*

### **A Tribute to Nancy Kishlar Mello**

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**N**ANCY KISHLAR MELLO, Ph.D., died on November 25, 2013, at age 78. This was a great loss for the alcohol and drug field, for science overall, and for her many friends and admirers.

Nancy Mello and Jack Mendelson, M.D., her late husband, taught me that science is about more than numbers and statistics. Much of the work that is accomplished in our field reflects developing and maintaining an open mind, a willingness to learn from others, the ability to face one's own constant need to learn more, a dedication to teaching young colleagues, and the good fortune to have the opportunity of forming close interpersonal relationships and learning important lessons from our friends. Nancy Mello was stellar at all of these skills, and many of my fondest memories of her involve our informal walks, sharing a good glass of red wine on a cold evening, and dinners with her and Jack. The two of them became among the closest friends for my wife Judy and me, as well as professional colleagues, for decades. During my career, I probably learned more about the personality of science from the two of them than almost anyone else, and I am sure that I am not alone in that sentiment.

After reading her work for years, I met Nancy Mello in 1975 when she and Jack agreed to speak at one of the inaugural symposia sponsored by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute at the University of Washington, where I had recently been appointed director. As always, Nancy's lecture was filled with fine science, and the university (and I personally) benefitted greatly from her presentation and her informal consultations. That visit was the beginning of a long, close, and warm relationship that, like any good friendship, seemed to immediately reestablish itself whenever we were together again and remained a lifelong mainstay for both my wife and me.

Nancy Mello received her doctorate from Pennsylvania State University in 1960, after which she spent 2 years as a Research Fellow in Psychology in several Harvard University laboratories, becoming a Research Associate and Director of the Operant Conditioning Section of the Stanley Cobb Laboratories for Psychiatric Research. She remained with Harvard until 1967, when she joined the National Institutes of Health,



becoming an integral part of a series of institutions that were instrumental in the formation of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), including the National Center for Prevention and Control of Alcoholism and the Division of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, as well as, in 1973, the formation of the NIAAA itself. In 1974, Nancy moved to the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research Center at McLean Hospital and the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School, remaining at these institutions until her recent death.

Along the way, Nancy became a close friend, mentor, and valued colleague to many individuals in our field. Her curriculum vitae lists more than 400 impressive publications that have appeared in almost every major journal and influential textbook in our field. She is perhaps best known for her meticulous research with drug self-administration in a series of animal models, primarily with rhesus monkeys. The substances of interest have included alcohol, cocaine, cannabis, and nicotine. Through her work, we have improved our understanding of brain physiology regarding alcohol and other drugs as well as hormonal effects of substances and improved our knowledge in the understudied questions related to substance use and problems in women. At the same time, she and Jack were among the first to carry out similar alcohol and drug administration studies in humans dating back to 1966 and on through 2013, including seminal studies regarding self-administration of alcohol, cannabis, and cocaine.

These explorations across species have combined to add important information to many aspects of our knowledge of the impact of alcohol and other drugs, including physiology and neurochemistry. Those efforts have established the basis for future prevention and treatment. To name only a few, Nancy's intimate understanding of the physiological aspects of substance use has facilitated evaluation of a range of medications for possible use in substance use disorders. These have included anatabine for smoking, along with drugs potentially useful in the treatment of stimulant dependence, including lofexidine, modafinil, monoamine oxidase inhibitors, and a range of experimental medications. Furthermore, she has been one of the few investigators in our field to address the challenges involved in evaluating the effects and potential treatments related to concomitant use of multiple drugs, including her work on combinations of opioids and stimulants, as well as her evaluation of buspirone for the treatment of the concomitant administration of nicotine and cocaine.

During her highly productive and busy career, Nancy Mello was generous in her efforts to facilitate the publications of other people's articles. Thus, in addition to her functioning as co-editor of what has become the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* from 1984 to 1991, she had been a regional and associate editor for *Physiology*

and Behavior; *Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior*; *Advances in Substance Abuse*; *Behavioral and Biological Research*; and *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, while also serving on the editorial boards of *Neuropsychopharmacology*, *Alcohol and Drug Research*, and the *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, as well as other publication venues. At the same time, she worked on multiple NIH-related committees and task forces, was a member of the President's Biomedical Research Panel, and was an active contributor to the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology and to the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD). Her high level of publication of superb science, as well as her unselfish contributions to our field, resulted in numerous well-earned honors. These have included multiple memberships in the Nominating Committee for the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine, the NIDA Board of Scientific Counselors, the Research Society on Alcohol Distinguished Research Award, and the AMERSA Betty Ford Award, as well as the Marian W. Fischman Memorial Award and the Nathan B. Eddy Award from CPDD.

In the midst of our sadness at recognizing that Nancy is no longer with us, it is important to remember that we have the opportunity of sharing our appreciation of all of the wonderful things that Nancy Mello has done for our field. Her stellar career began in earnest in the early to mid-1960s, a time when women in science faced unique and daunting challenges. Despite these obstacles, Nancy persevered, added significantly to the scientific basis for our fields, and has helped lead the way toward future improvements in our understanding and treatment of alcohol and drug use disorders. We are grateful to her not only for her scientific accomplishments but also for paving the way for the women in science who followed her, as well as for enriching our lives with her friendship and unstinting support of young people entering our field.

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